

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system,
5 comprising the steps of:
 requesting an address definition from a second device to a first device;
 returning the address definition to the second device from the first device;
 obtaining a corresponding rule definition for the address definition;
 generating a new address definition based upon the corresponding rule definition
10 at the second device; and
 returning the newly generated address from the second address to the first device.
2. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system
according to claim 1 wherein the addresses include e-mail addresses, document folders,
15 telephone number and fax numbers.
3. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system
according to claim 1 wherein the first device is an existing user account management unit
for user account information.
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4. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system
according to claim 1 wherein the second device is an address maintenance unit that
corresponds to the existing user account management unit for managing address
information.
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5. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system
according to claim 4 wherein the address maintenance unit manages delivery methods by
adding a new delivery method.
- 30 6. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system
according to claim 5 wherein the new delivery method is specified in the rule definition.

7. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 6 wherein the rule definition further includes an ID value, a Source value, a Condition value, a Name Generation Method value, and a Type Generation Method value.

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8. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 4 wherein the address maintenance unit manages delivery methods by deleting an existing delivery method.

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9. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 4 wherein the address maintenance unit updates the address information based upon the user account information.

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10. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 1 wherein said generating the new address definition is performed prior to said requesting the address definition.

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11. The method of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 1 wherein the address definition each has a unique ID and further comprises additional steps of:

determining whether or not an ID already exists;
storing the newly generated address if the ID does not exist; and
replacing information with the newly generated address if the ID exists.

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12. A system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system, comprising:

a third device sending a request for an address definition for use with a predetermined operation;

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a second device connected to said third device for receiving the request for the address definition and sending the request for the address definition; and

a first device connected to said second device for returning the address definition to said second device in response to the address definition request, said first device further

including a address maintenance unit for maintaining address information; wherein said second device obtaining a corresponding rule definition for the address definition and generating a new address definition based upon the corresponding rule definition, said second device returning the newly generated address to said third device.

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13. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 12 wherein said address maintenance unit manages e-mail addresses, document folders, telephone number and fax numbers.

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14. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 12 wherein said second device includes an existing user account management unit for managing existing user account information.

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15. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 14 wherein said address maintenance unit manages the address information for the existing user account information.

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16. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 15 wherein the address maintenance unit manages delivery methods by adding a new delivery method.

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17. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 15 wherein the address maintenance unit manages delivery methods by deleting an existing delivery method.

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18. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 16 wherein the address maintenance unit additionally manages an ID value, a Source value, a Condition value, a Name Generation Method value, and a Type Generation Method value.

19. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 15 wherein the address maintenance unit updates the address information based upon the user account information.

5 20. The system for flexibly managing addresses for a communication system according to claim 12 wherein the address maintenance unit maintains a unique ID for the address definition and further determines whether or not an ID already exists, the address maintenance unit storing the newly generated address if the ID does not exist, the address maintenance unit replacing information with the newly generated address if the ID exists.

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21. A computer readable medium storing computer executable instructions for performing the tasks of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system, the computer executable instructions comprising the steps of:

15 requesting an address definition from a second device to a first device;
 returning the address definition to the second device from the first device;
 obtaining a corresponding rule definition for the address definition;
 generating a new address definition based upon the corresponding rule definition
at the second device; and
 returning the newly generated address from the second address to the first device.

22. A computer readable medium storing computer executable instructions for performing the tasks of flexibly managing addresses for a communication system, the computer executable instructions comprising the steps of:

- 5 requesting an address definition from a second device to a first device;
 returning the address definition to the second device from the first device;
 obtaining a corresponding rule definition for the address definition;
 generating a new address definition based upon the corresponding rule definition
at the second device;
- 10 returning the newly generated address from the second address to the first device,
the address definition each has a unique ID;
 determining whether or not an ID already exists;
 storing the newly generated address if the ID does not exist; and
 replacing information with the newly generated address if the ID exists.

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